

wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said perimeter.

2. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are longitudinally aligned.

3. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are arranged at said perimeter in a staggered configuration.

4. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 3 wherein the connected stiffening members are arranged in a grid pattern.

5. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members overlaps another one of the connected stiffening members.

6. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members interdigitates with another one of the connected stiffening members.

7. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said filament is elastic.

8. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members have a geometric shape.

9. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members have a cross-section with a perimeter that includes a curvilinear portion.

10. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members have a polygonal cross-section.

11. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members include at least one raised surface.

12. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 11 wherein a raised surface is substantially smooth.

13. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 11 wherein a raised surface is substantially pointed.

14. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 11 wherein a raised surface is sufficiently sharp to pierce an occlusive material.

15. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 11 wherein a raised surface comprises a saw-tooth cutting element.

16. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only a longitudinally central region of said balloon.

17. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for engaging an occlusive material in a lumen.

18. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for piercing an occlusive material in a lumen.

19. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a stent.

20. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a stent-graft.

21. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located within said balloon abutting an inner surface of said balloon.

22. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein a portion of at least one of the connected stiffening members is radio-opaque.

23. (previously amended) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed on a sheet of material adapted to be applied to said balloon.

Claims 24-32 are withdrawn.

Claims 33-40 are cancelled.

Claims 41-47 are withdrawn.

48. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said filament is inelastic.

49. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said filament is radio-opaque.

50. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said filament is straight.

51. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said filament is nonlinear.

52. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein said at least one stiffening member is connected to a plurality of the stiffening members by a corresponding plurality of filaments.

53. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only an end region of said balloon.

54. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of a region of said balloon extending longitudinally no more than three-quarters of a length of said balloon.

55. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members includes a projection.

56. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection is radio-opaque.

57. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection has a pointed end.

58. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection has a blunt end.

59. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection has an end that is sufficiently sharp to pierce an occlusive material.

60. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection has an end that is sufficiently sharp to penetrate a vessel wall.

61. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection comprises a saw tooth cutting element.

62. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection is adapted to removably couple to a device at said balloon.

63. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 62 wherein said device is a stent.

64. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 62 wherein said device is a stent-graft.

65. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 62 wherein said projection is adapted to interdigitate with said device.

66. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection is adapted to engage an occlusive material in a lumen.

67. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 55 wherein said projection is adapted to deform an occlusive material in a lumen.

68. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a device.

69. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein a plurality of the connected stiffening members each includes a projection.

70. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 69 wherein a projection is connected to another projection by a filament.

71. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 69 wherein a projection is connected to a plurality of projections by a corresponding plurality of filaments.

72. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 69 further comprising means for connecting a projection to another projection.

73. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members has a geometric shape.

74. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members has a cross-section with a perimeter that includes a curvilinear portion.

75. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a polygonal cross-section.

76. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a rectangular cross-section.

77. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a triangular cross-section.

78. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is cylindrical.

79. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is longitudinally straight-walled and has a rectangular cross-section.

80. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only a limited longitudinal region of said balloon.

81. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 80 wherein said limited longitudinal region has a length no greater than three-quarters of a length of a cylindrical section of said balloon.

82. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located partly or entirely on an outer surface of a wall of said balloon.

83. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located entirely within a wall of said balloon.

84. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located partly or entirely on an inner surface of said balloon.

85. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members extends into a wall of said balloon and protrudes from a surface of said balloon.

86. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 5 wherein a portion of a first connected stiffening member extends above an outer surface of said balloon and extends over a portion of a second connected stiffening member.

87. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 86 wherein said first connected stiffening member is in contact with said second connected stiffening member.

88. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 86 wherein said first connected stiffening member is not in contact with said second connected stiffening member.

89. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 86 wherein said first connected stiffening member is connected to said second connected stiffening member by said filament.

90. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 86 wherein said first connected stiffening member is not connected to said second connected stiffening member.

91. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 11 wherein a raised surface is sufficiently sharp to penetrate a vessel wall.

92. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 17 wherein said means for engaging comprises means for deforming said occlusive material.

93. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 17 wherein said means for engaging comprises a projection.

94. (previously presented) The balloon of claim 17 wherein said means for engaging comprises a raised surface.

95. (currently amended) A stiffened dilating balloon catheter comprising:  
an expandable balloon including a plurality of longitudinally discontinuous stiffening members disposed along a perimeter of said balloon;  
wherein said balloon is made of a flexible material;

wherein the stiffening members are less flexible than said balloon;  
wherein at least one of the stiffening members is directly connected to another  
one of the stiffening members by a filament; and  
wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said  
perimeter.

96. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the  
connected stiffening members are longitudinally aligned.

97. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the  
connected stiffening members are arranged at said perimeter in a staggered configuration.

98. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 97 wherein the  
connected stiffening members are arranged in a grid pattern.

99. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one  
of the connected stiffening members overlaps another one of the connected stiffening members.

100. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one  
of the connected stiffening members interdigitates with another one of the connected stiffening  
members.

101. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said  
filament is elastic.

102. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the  
connected stiffening members have a geometric shape.

103. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the  
connected stiffening members have a cross-section with a perimeter that includes a curvilinear  
portion.

104. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members have a polygonal cross-section.

105. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members include at least one raised surface.

106. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 105 wherein a raised surface is substantially smooth.

107. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 105 wherein a raised surface is substantially pointed.

108. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 105 wherein a raised surface is sufficiently sharp to pierce an occlusive material.

109. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 105 wherein a raised surface comprises a saw-tooth cutting element.

110. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only a longitudinally central region of said balloon.

111. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for engaging an occlusive material in a lumen.

112. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for piercing an occlusive material in a lumen.

113. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a stent.

114. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a stent-graft.

115. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located within said balloon abutting an inner surface of said balloon.

116. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein a portion of at least one of the connected stiffening members is radio-opaque.

117. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed on a sheet of material adapted to be applied to said balloon.

118. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said filament is inelastic.

119. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said filament is radio-opaque.

120. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said filament is straight.

121. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said filament is nonlinear.

122. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein said at least one stiffening member is connected to a plurality of the stiffening members by a corresponding plurality of filaments.

123. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only an end region of said balloon.

124. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of a region of said balloon extending longitudinally no more than three-quarters of a length of said balloon.

125. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members includes a projection.

126. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection is radio-opaque.

127. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection has a pointed end.

128. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection has a blunt end.

129. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection has an end that is sufficiently sharp to pierce an occlusive material.

130. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection has an end that is sufficiently sharp to penetrate a vessel wall.

131. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection comprises a saw tooth cutting element.

132. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection is adapted to removably couple to a device at said balloon.

133. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 132 wherein said device is a stent.

134. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 132 wherein said device is a stent-graft.

135. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 132 wherein said projection is adapted to interdigitate with said device.

136. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection is adapted to engage an occlusive material in a lumen.

137. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 125 wherein said projection is adapted to deform an occlusive material in a lumen.

138. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members comprises means for removably coupling to a device.

139. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein a plurality of the connected stiffening members each includes a projection.

140. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 139 wherein a projection is connected to another projection by a filament.

141. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 139 wherein a projection is connected to a plurality of projections by a corresponding plurality of filaments.

142. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 139 further comprising means for connecting a projection to another projection.

143. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members has a geometric shape.

144. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members has a cross-section with a perimeter that includes a curvilinear portion.

145. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a polygonal cross-section.

146. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a rectangular cross-section.

147. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least a portion of one of the connected stiffening members has a triangular cross-section.

148. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is cylindrical.

149. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is longitudinally straight-walled and has a rectangular cross-section.

150. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein the connected stiffening members are disposed along the perimeter of only a limited longitudinal region of said balloon.

151. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 150 wherein said limited longitudinal region has a length no greater than three-quarters of a length of a cylindrical section of said balloon.

152. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located partly or entirely on an outer surface of a wall of said balloon.

153. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located entirely within a wall of said balloon.

154. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members is located partly or entirely on an inner surface of said balloon.

155. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 95 wherein at least one of the connected stiffening members extends into a wall of said balloon and protrudes from a surface of said balloon.

156. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 99 wherein a portion of a first connected stiffening member extends above an outer surface of said balloon and extends over a portion of a second connected stiffening member.

157. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 156 wherein said first connected stiffening member is in contact with said second connected stiffening member.

158. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 156 wherein said first connected stiffening member is not in contact with said second connected stiffening member.

159. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 156 wherein said first connected stiffening member is connected to said second connected stiffening member by said filament.

160. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 156 wherein said first connected stiffening member is not connected to said second connected stiffening member.

161. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 105 wherein a raised surface is sufficiently sharp to penetrate a vessel wall.

162. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 111 wherein said means for engaging comprises means for deforming said occlusive material.

163. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 111 wherein said means for engaging comprises a projection.

164. (previously presented) The balloon catheter of claim 111 wherein said means for engaging comprises a raised surface.

165. (currently amended) A stiffened dilating balloon for use in the human body comprising:

an expandable balloon including a plurality of longitudinally discontinuous stiffening members disposed along a perimeter of said balloon; and

means for directly connecting at least one of the stiffening members to another one of the stiffening members;

wherein said balloon is made of a flexible material;

wherein the stiffening members are less flexible than said balloon; and

wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said perimeter.

166. (currently amended) A stiffened dilating balloon catheter comprising:  
an expandable balloon including a plurality of longitudinally discontinuous stiffening members disposed along a perimeter of said balloon; and

means for directly connecting at least one of the stiffening members to another one of the stiffening members;

wherein said balloon is made of a flexible material;

wherein the stiffening members are less flexible than said balloon; and

wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said perimeter.

167. (previously presented) A method of dilating a portion of a lumen in a human body comprising the steps of:

introducing into said human body an expandable balloon including a plurality of longitudinally discontinuous stiffening members disposed along a perimeter of said balloon;

wherein said balloon is made of a flexible material;

wherein the stiffening members are less flexible than said balloon;

wherein at least one of the stiffening members is connected to another one of the stiffening members by a filament; and

wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said perimeter;

positioning said expandable balloon at said portion; and

expanding said expandable balloon to cause the connected stiffening members to exert a first radial force against said portion;

wherein said filament prevents a distance between the connected stiffening members from exceeding a maximum distance; and

wherein said first radial force is greater than a radial force directly applied by an outer surface of said balloon against said portion.

168. (previously presented) The method of claim 167 wherein the step of positioning said expandable balloon includes the step of traversing a tortuous pathway in said human body.

169. (previously presented) The method of claim 167 wherein said portion comprises a stenosis.

170. (previously presented) A method of dilating a device in a lumen in a human body comprising the steps of:

introducing into said human body an expandable balloon including a plurality of longitudinally discontinuous stiffening members disposed along a perimeter of said balloon;

wherein said balloon is made of a flexible material;

wherein the stiffening members are less flexible than said balloon;

wherein at least one of the stiffening members is connected to another one of the stiffening members by a filament; and

wherein each stiffening member affects a configuration of an area of said perimeter;

positioning said expandable balloon at said device; and

expanding said expandable balloon to cause the connected stiffening members to exert a first radial force against said device;

wherein said filament prevents a distance between the connected stiffening members from exceeding a maximum distance; and

wherein said first radial force is greater than a radial force directly applied by an outer surface of said balloon against said device.

171. (previously presented) The method of claim 170 wherein the step of positioning said expandable balloon includes the step of traversing a tortuous pathway in said human body.